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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2012  
TAGS: MARR MASS MOPS PREL TP  
SUBJECT: SAO TOME: DEFENCE MINISTER WANTS HELP ON STATUS  
OF FORCES AGREEMENT

REF: A. LIBREVILLE 0461

1B. STATE 141741

Classified By: CDA Nathan Holt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Sao Tome and Principe (STP) Minister of Defence Oscar Sousa told CDA November 10 that it would be useful for the USG to send a team to STP to negotiate a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Sousa said he was impatient to get the agreement concluded. For the second time, he requested examples of SOFAs concluded by the United States with other countries. Sousa explained that such examples would help persuade others in the STP bureaucracy to move forward more quickly. Sousa suggested that February 2008 would be a good time for the U.S. to send a negotiating team. CDA said he would check into the availability of examples of other SOFAs, some of which are published and publicly disseminated. We also promised to check and see whether a negotiating team could be sent to STP. Post delivered a diplomatic note proposing the text of a SOFA to the government of STP on August 23, and has followed up regularly since then.

12. (C) Separately, STP Foreign Minister Gustavo Dos Anjos told us November 9 that the government is still reviewing the agreement. He had no estimate of when that review would be completed.

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Comment  
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13. (C) STP's review of our proposed SOFA needs a jump start. Our sense is that the defence minister genuinely wants an agreement concluded quickly, and that the foreign minister is somewhat taken aback by the perceived breadth of the proposed text. Regardless of whether the Sactomeans provide their promised written comments on our proposal, the dispatch of a negotiating team empowered to clarify issues and agree alternative language would be useful--in February 2008 (as the defence minister proposes) or as soon as the team can be assembled. End Comment.

HOLT